



COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS & PLANNING

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Human Services Director
MICHAEL FROST
Planning Administrator
ZACHARY BERLINER
Mental Health Administrator
AFN Coordinator
MEG ISBITSKI
Addictions Services Director
LISA FEDERICO

Aging & Disability Services
JOANNE FETZKO
Community Development
KIMBERLY COWART
One Stop Career Center
Juvenile Institutional Services
MONICA MULLIGAN
Richard Hall Community HWC
NICCI SPINAZZOLA
Rutgers Cooperative Extension
LISA ROTHENBURGER
Veterans Services
PETER NIEMIEC
Volunteer Services
WILLIAM F. CROSBY
Youth Services
LINDA M. PORCARO

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Wednesday, April 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Meeting held via Zoom and In-person

Council Members Present:

Chair Mary Jane DiPaolo, Community Child Care Solutions
Vice-Chair Pastor Tim Wolf, Pioneer Family Success Center
Secretary Diann Robinson, Adult Day Center
David Walker, Visions and Pathways
LuAnn Dias, Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM)
Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department
Dr. Mark Avery, Zarephath Christian Church
Michelle Dufour, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)
Mike Frost, Director of the Department of Human Services
Nicci Spinazzola, Richard Hall Community Health and Wellness Center
Paul Grzella, The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB)
Richard Schumann, Family and Community Services (FCS)

Council Members Excused:

Joanne Kemp, Board of Social Services
Nancy Good, Alternatives, Inc
Rajni Chopra, Martin Luther King Youth Center (MLKYC)

Council Members Absent:

Michele Boronkas, Safe + Sound Somerset

Council Officials and Liaisons:

Nelson Troche, New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS)
Rick Hager, New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJDCF)

Somerset County Department of Human Services (SCDHS) Staff:

Coordinator Rheanah Johnson, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Angelica Sandi, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Antonietta Phelan, Office of Youth Services
Ellen Russo, Office on Aging and Disability Services
Henry Young, Office of Youth Services
Jannell Wilson, Office on Aging and Disability Services

Jennifer Guyette, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Kim Cowart, Community Development
Kristy Soriano, Office of Youth Services
Monica Mulligan, Greater Raritan One Stop
Sandra Avellan, Office on Aging and Disability Services
Stephanie Billitz, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Zachary Berliner, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

Guests:

Andrea Strack, Legal Services of Northwest Jersey
Brendan Ward, Big Brother Big Sister of New Jersey (BBBSNJ)
Crystal Hooper, Somerset County Library System of New Jersey (SCLSNJ)
Debra Crossman, Community Hope
Eric Meyer, Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey (CCGNJ)
Jamie Gonzalez, Zufall Health Center
Nikki Bryant, Community Child Care Solutions
Reina Garcia Perfecto, Zufall Health Center
Shaina Sherman, Jewish Family Services
Steve Nagel, HomeSharing, Inc.

I. Call Meeting to Order & Introductions

Mary Jane DiPaolo called the meeting to order at 1:33 PM. A quorum was established.

II. Approval of the March 22, 2023, Minutes

Motion to approve the March 2023, meeting minutes was made by LuAnn Dias and seconded by Rajni Chopra. Motion carried.

III. Presentation – Project Lifesaver – Jannell Wilson, LSW, Eldercare Educator Somerset County

- Project Lifesaver relies on radio frequency technology and specially trained Sheriff’s Officers. Clients that are enrolled in the Project Lifesaver program wear a personalized wristband that emits a tracking signal. This one-ounce battery operated radio wristband-like transmitter emits an automatic tracking signal every second, 24 hours a day. Each wristband has a unique radio frequency.
- The Sheriff’s Office Project Lifesaver Task Force is equipped with special tracking equipment that can receive each radio frequency up to about one mile. In the event that a client becomes missing, the caregiver will immediately call 911 and the task force will be deployed to the client’s point last seen.
- Who benefits from the program?
 - Elderly who are affected by:
 - Alzheimer’s Disease
 - Dementia
 - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and other neurological disorders
 - Children with developmental disorders, such as:
 - Down Syndrome
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - TBI and other neurological disorders
- Criteria for Eligibility:

- Criteria used to determine eligibility for older adults:
 - 60 years of age and older
 - Actively wandering
 - Diagnosis of TBI or dementia from a physician
 - Accompanied by a caregiver 24/7
- Criteria used to determine eligibility for children:
 - Between the ages of 6 – 21
 - Actively wandering
 - Evaluation by a physician
 - Accompanied by a caregiver 24/7
- Contact the Somerset County Office on Aging & Disability Services toll free at 1-888-747-1122 and a specialist will assist you. An assessment is required at intake a biennially (every two years) to determine eligibility and qualifiers to remain on the program. Services may be terminated for clients who are not actively wandering.

IV. State and County Agency Reports
Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) – Michelle DuFour

2023	March
Families	376 (71% intake cases)
Children	731
Children in Placement	36
Referral Type	
Child Protective Service Referrals	151
Child Welfare Referrals	29
Allegation Type	
Neglect	178
Physical Abuse	80
Sexual Abuse	21
Emotional Abuse	3

New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) - Nelson Troche

- Public hearings for the New Jersey Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund
 - There will be six hearings with two being virtual.
 - First hearing is virtual on **Thursday, May 4, 2023, (5 – 7 P.M.)**
 - **Monday, May 22, 2023 (1 – 3 P.M.)**
Central Jersey
 Mercer County Community College
 Roma Bank Auditorium
 Conference Center
 1200 Old Trenton Road, West Windsor

- **Monday, June 12, 2023 (10 A.M. – Noon)**
South Jersey
Camden County College (Blackwood)
Cim Auditorium
200 College Road, Blackwood
- **Thursday, June 22, 2023 (11 A.M. – 1 P.M.)**
North Jersey
Essex County College
Clara E. Dasher Student Center
303 University Avenue, Newark
- **Thursday, July 20, 2023 (11 A.M. – 1 P.M.)**
Virtual: Link Will Be Sent After Registering

Community Development – Kim Cowart

- The housing wage in Somerset County-the measure of how much one must earn working 40-hours per week to afford housing- is as follows:
 - 1 bedroom apartment = \$27.98 per hour/40 hours
 - 2-bedroom apartment = \$35.60 per hour/40 hours
- Affordability is based on the fair market rent
 - 1 bedroom apartment is \$1455
 - 2-bedroom apartment is \$1851
- A person making minimum wage must work 110 hours per week to afford a 2 bedroom according to the housing wage.
- The results from the annual Point in Time count on January 24, 2023, were up significantly. This is the annual survey that counts the number of people experiencing homelessness in Somerset County on one night of the year.
- Over the last two years or so, there was a drop in the number of individuals counted. Since the COVID restriction have been relaxed, the numbers may reflect people may now feel more comfortable utilizing emergency sheltering options. Also capacity limits may have increased.
- Last year in Somerset County, 56% of the homeless population was Black in comparison to the county population being 10% Black. This year that number went down to 50%. It is important to note about 90 people who did not identify their race.
- There are currently nine low-income apartments designated to individuals facing housing insecurity or homelessness being rented at the brand-new Cornerstone development in Branchburg, NJ. The rent is fixed at \$450.

NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF) - Rick Hager

- Open enrollment time for recertification of NJ Family Care Health Insurance is happening now.
- New Jersey Association of Counties is having their annual conference May 3- 5, 2023 at Caesars Hotel in Atlantic City. DCF will have a booth sharing resources and information.

Human Services Director's Report – Mike Frost

- The county budget is expected to be introduced on May 9, 2023, with acceptance in June.
- The Department will begin meeting at the end of the year for the next Non-Profit Purchase of Service cycle for 2024.
- Working with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) in a shelter task force to do things differently in the future. All municipalities are required to have an emergency shelter plan. There has been much discussion regarding policy and procedure.
- Zachary Berliner provided updates regarding the Somerset Helps Mobile Outreach Van. The van is expected to make a debut at the Somerset County Stigma Free Conference on May 19, 2023. The van will be used for targeted outreach to vulnerable populations to mobilize much needed services and resources.
- There will be a Community Police Alliance Coordinator in Bound Brook, NJ. The position is a social worker imbedded in the police department. The person who takes on the position is required to be licensed and speak Spanish. The timeline is to have someone hired by the Fall.

Committee Reports

- **Executive Committee- Paul Grzella**
The committee is working to narrow the focus for the council regarding outreach. The goal is to actively participate in the Somerset Helps mobile outreach van.
- **Planning Committee- Mike Frost**
Mike Frost received a call from the aid of Assemblyman John DiMaio, regarding the social work licensing advocacy letter. There was some significant agreement this is worth agitating about legislatively.
- **Membership Committee- Rheanah Johnson**
The committee continued discussions regarding the role of a community member in the HSAC. There was also discussion regarding the one-pager used for advertising the council. The goal is to make it more public friendly.

New Business- None

Agency Highlights/Announcements

- LuAnn Dias- shared the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA), welcomes the public to join DCA's Social Work new outreach program: New Jersey Social Work Licensure: you've got questions, we've got answers. The program is a forum where Social Workers can speak directly to the Executive Director to ask questions about the process of obtaining Social Work licensure by the State of New Jersey. The session is on April 27, 2023, at 1:00 PM via Zoom., the public will be invited to pose questions to Executive Director Edie Nugent. These questions
- Paul Grzella- The GRWDB's Summer Youth Employment Program has over 80 position to fill from 38 different organizations. The youth application deadline has been extended to May 15, 2023.
 - On Saturday, May 6, 2023, from 11 AM – 2 PM the GRWDB in collaboration with the Commission on the Status of Women is holding job fair and resource event. There will be a Dress for Success corner.
 - The Greater Raritan Job Fair is on May 16, 2023, from 10 AM – 2 PM at the Hindu Temple and Cultural Society. More than 60 employers in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, as well as employers in some surrounding counties have, registered for this free event.
- Nikki Bryant- Community Child Care Solutions has relaunched a new website www.communitychildcaresolutions.org
- Mary Jane Dipaolo- On April 29, 2023, Community Child Care Solutions is celebrating provider appreciation day.

- Rheanah Johnson- Free Community Resource Event May 19, 2023, 4 PM – 8 PM and May 20, 2023, 10 AM – 2 PM at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Somerville, NJ. Household goods will be available and agency resource tables.
 - The Somerset County Youth Council is hosting their annual Safe Night Event on May 6, 2023, from 5 PM – 9 PM. The free event is open to all youth in grades 7-12 in Somerset County. There will be games, activities, food and more.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tim Wolf and seconded Paul Grzella. The meeting was adjourned at 2:34 PM.

The next meeting will be held on May 24, 2023, at 1:30 PM via Zoom. The link will be sent out a week prior via email.